

Devotional and Selections

A SUNDAY IN LONDON.

Donald Fraser, in Toronto Presbyterian.

Being in London last summer on Whitsunday, June 7, it was my privilege to hear Canon Hensley Henson preach in St. Margaret's, Westminster, on "The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." The service was fully choral, and the chanting of the Nicene Creed by the choir impressed upon a humble Presbyterian, who admires simplicity and directness in religious service, the value of a measure of elaborateness and the fittingness of seeking the beauty of holiness in the public worship of God. The sermon was closely read, but it was most scholarly and eloquent, abounding in practical applications. Its manner was clear-cut, decisive, and with a nervous energy which riveted your attention from the start. Its note was strongly evangelical, broadly appreciative of Puritanism, quoting with approval from John Owen, though putting in a disclaimer as to his exclusive spirit of what was churchly. You felt thrilled as he spake of the need of a positive and pungent flavor in the moral tone of those who would witness for God amid the conventionalities of modern social life. Bishop Mann, of Dakota, who was a fellow passenger on the steamer from Quebec, and whom I heard preach on Sabbath morning at sea with great pleasure from the words, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," was in the congregation that morning. At the close of the service, walking down Trafalgar square, he told me that he was agreeably disappointed in the sermon. He apparently had expected something more sensational.

That evening, my first and only Sunday in London, I chose Regent square, above all the thousand ecclesiastical attractions in this vast metropolis of the world, as my place of worship, and chiefly for these reasons: that not only was it near my boarding-house on Brunswick square, and that I could see on the way the house in Hunter street where one of the greatest masters of English prose, as well as the most eminent English art critic, John Ruskin, first saw the light of day, February 8, 1819; but also that in this church the great Edward Irving, the friend of Carlyle, whose noble statue I saw in the market square of the old border town of Annan, was minister for some years before his ejection for heresy in 1832. He had been called from Glasgow, where he had been assistant to Dr. Chalmers in the Town church, to Halton Garden Caledonian church, London, in 1822. Here he met with unparalleled popularity for a few years. "The doors were crowded," says Carlyle, in his *Reminiscences*, "long before opening, and you got in by ticket; but the first sublime rush of what once seemed more than popularity, and had been nothing more—Lady Jersey sitting on the pulpit steps, Canning, Brougham, Macintosh, etc., pushing day after day—was now quite over, and there remained only a popularity of 'the people'; not of the plebs at all, but never higher than of the well-dressed populus henceforth, which was a sad change to the sanguine man." This sad change was the result of his own va-

garies, his calculations concerning our Lord's second coming, his theories of latter day miracles, gifts of tongues, and prophecyings. In 1830 he was convicted of heresy by the London Presbytery, and ultimately deposed from the ministry in a church in Annan, only a stone's throw from the humble cottage where he was born. John Currie, chimney-sweep, now occupies it. Over its door there is a small slab of granite with this inscription: "In this house Edward Irving was born 4th Aug., 1792. He left neither an enemy nor a wrong behind him." He died in 1834.

Ivor Robertson is now pastor of this historic church. He was the preacher this evening, and his theme was, "The average man in religion." His text was I Kings 18:12, "But I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth:" a character sketch of Obadiah. It was a helpful analysis and portrayal of the man in humble circumstances who was acting from principle, and in a courageous, heroic spirit. Such a man, true to God and his cause, was appreciated even by an ungodly master, and though only a common man was in reality most uncommon. The service of praise in this church was especially noteworthy. The choir-leader was the all-important figure—an elderly man with a rich, full voice. Before the service proper began there was a season of singing, in which the skill of the precentor was distinctly felt; then, at the close of the service, there was another free rendering of hymns unannounced; and then, in the most leisurely and delightful way, after lingering for silent prayer, the congregation dismissed, as though loath to leave. To the stranger it was all most impressive.

Bass River, N. S.

PREACHING CHRIST.

The interesting reminiscences of an able and persuasive preacher, tell how he was led into the sort of preaching that made his ministry effective. Going at once from the seminary to the pastorate of a large city church, he was somewhat alarmed as to the sufficiency of his furnishing for his exacting task. It occurred to him that he would preach chiefly upon the direct teachings of Jesus Christ, until he should have grown somewhat in thoughts and experience. He did make the words of Christ the chief theme of his preaching throughout his entire ministry, and did not miss the growth in thought and experience which he desired. He always had something to preach, and he could preach it with authority. The rest of the New Testament would center itself about the word of Christ. The Old Testament would illustrate and illumine the teaching of the New, centering in Christ. And thus the doctrine of the whole divine Book, permeated with the direct teaching of Jesus, would be found applicable to the thought and condition of the modern time. It would be for the great profit of the church and the world if more modern preachers could find out that there is plenty for their preaching in what Jesus said and taught.—Philadelphia Presbyterian.

It is impossible to mentally or socially enslave a Bible reading people.—Horace Greely.